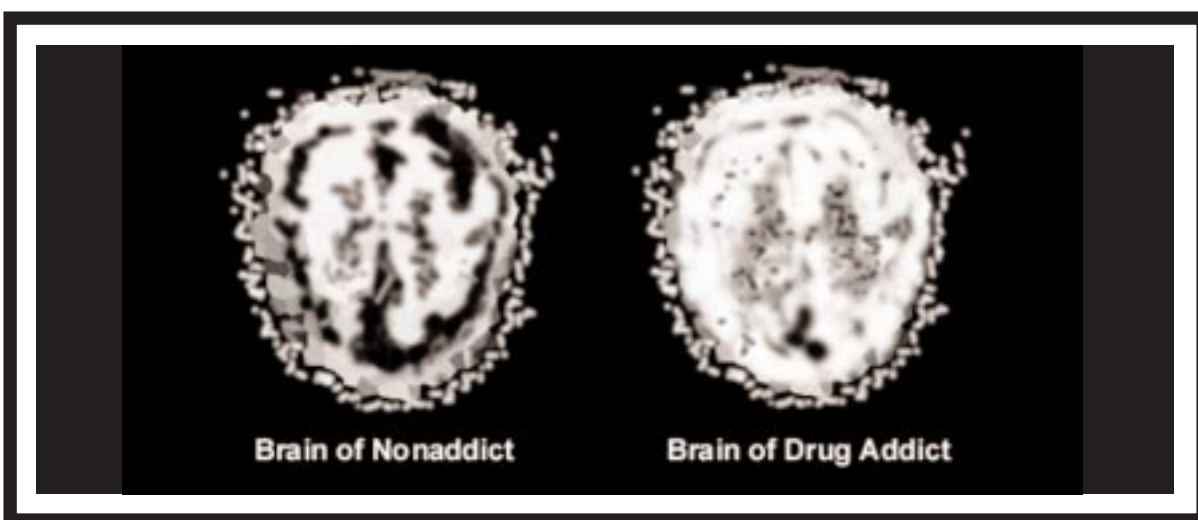


National Institute of Justice

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ADDICTION IS A BRAIN DISEASE—AND IT MATTERS



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Crime's Decline—Why?

The IDENT System: Putting “Structure to the Chaos of the Border”

Reducing Crime by Harnessing International Best Practice

Using City-Level Surveys to Better Understand Community Policing

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The content of this fall edition of the National Institute of Justice Journal is indicative of the broad spectrum of NIJ's research and development activities and interests.

For example, the lead article, "Addiction Is a Brain Disease - and It Matters" summarizes a message delivered by Dr. Alan I Leshner, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, at one of NIJ's annual research and evaluation conferences. The scientific insights reported by Dr. Leshner have important implications for NIJ's Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program and the joint NIJ-ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy) treatment-oriented efforts to help break the link between drugs and crime (see "Breaking the Cycle of Drug Abuse in Birmingham" in the July 1998 issue).

This edition's second article ("Crime's Decline - Why?") consists of summaries of several papers presented at an NIJ-sponsored conference held earlier this year at the Northwestern University School of Law. The summary by Alfred Blumstein and Richard Rosenfield notes that the largest contribution to the decline in homicides during the past several years stems from the reduction in the use of handguns by young people. That kind of outcome, in Boston at least, was facilitated by the NIJ-sponsored Boston Gun Project (see "Pulling Levers: Getting Deterrence Right" in the July 1998 issue).

How technology is helping the Border patrol achieve its goals is one focus of "The IDENT System." IDENT technology, originally conceived of and used by the U.S. Navy to process Haitian refugees, is illustrative of a major objective of NIJ's Office of Science and Technology - that is, to support and facilitate adaptation of certain U.S. Department of Defense technologies to criminal justice uses.

Reflecting NIJ's growing interest and involvement in matters international is "Reducing Crime by Harnessing International Best Practice." The Institute's recently established International Center fosters dialogue between U.S. researchers, practitioners, and policymakers and their counterparts in other countries on many important topics.

The issue's last feature, "Using City-Level Surveys to Better Understand Community Policing," notes the upcoming availability of software developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to enable police and sheriffs' departments to collect local victimization data as well as to obtain data on citizens' perceptions of community policing and neighborhood issues. The availability of such tools will further the goals of NIJ's substantial research and development efforts in the area of community policing including evaluations, technology, and local police-researcher partnerships.

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USING CITY-LEVEL SURVEYS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY POLICING

by Steven K. Smith
and David W. Hayeslip*



Increasingly, police departments around the Nation have expressed interest in conducting citywide surveys to gather information on criminal victimizations, attitudes of citizens toward police, the willingness of the public to report crimes to police, and the impact of different community policing strategies and tactics on crime and neighborhood conditions.¹

Two critical components of a successful community policing philosophy are obtaining citizen feedback and conducting periodic evaluations of police agency outreach efforts. Through the use of survey research, police and sheriffs' departments can collect important neighborhood-level data to assist in their assessment of crime prevention tactics.

To help foster such local-level research, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)² recently completed a joint project that involved conducting crime victimization surveys in 12 cities.

The BJS-COPS project developed software enabling local jurisdictions to conduct their own surveys of this type. It will be available soon, as discussed later.

The survey project used the standard National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) questionnaire as the core data collection instrument (see "National Crime Victimization Survey") to gather local data on victimization. City-level victimization surveys modeled after NCVS allow local jurisdictions to use the identical NCVS questionnaire and assess how local results compare with the national pattern. The survey project also collected data on citizen perceptions of community policing and neighborhood issues.

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NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

Administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is the Nation's primary source of data about crime victimization and victims of crime. NCVS provides the only national crime measure that includes both those crimes that people experience but do not report to law enforcement authorities and those they do report.

The Nation's second largest ongoing household survey, NCVS provides data on the number of rapes, sexual assaults, robberies, assaults, thefts, household burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts experienced each year by U.S. residents age 12 or older and their households. NCVS also enables BJS to estimate the likeli-

hood of victimization for those crimes for segments of the population, such as the elderly or city dwellers.

NCVS yields data on the characteristics of violent offenders as well as on the impact, frequency, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States. During a collection year, data are obtained in 6-month intervals from a nationally representative sample of about 50,000 households, encompassing more than 100,000 persons. NCVS was initiated in 1972 and redesigned in 1992.

Community policing

COPS supports such data collection and encourages law enforcement agencies to consider using citizen surveys for planning and evaluating their community policing and problem-solving efforts.

Community policing - a fundamental shift from traditional, reactive policing - stresses stopping crime before it occurs. Community policing is an integral part of combating crime and improving the quality of life in the Nation's cities, towns, and rural areas.

Community policing entails a policing philosophy that promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes, and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through innovative, problem-solving tactics and community-police partnerships. Other core components of community policing include decentralizing command and transforming policing agencies to support and empower frontline officers.

City-level survey data on victimization and community policing

Because NCVS is designed to produce national estimates, a special sample was required to collect information within a specific local jurisdiction. The city-level survey was designed to capture reliable estimates for the amount of violent crime, which includes robbery, rape, sexual assault, and aggravated and simple assault experienced by household members age 12 or older.³

In addition to victimization estimates, data from the local area survey provided a better understanding of the impact of different community policing strategies. The city-level survey collected information on how residents learn about crimes in their neighborhoods, how they perceive law enforcement's role in preventing and responding to crime, and the nature of the public's interaction with the police.

This survey was designed to provide a unique, city-based dataset to examine attitudes toward community policing activities, perceptions of crime, police-public contact, and characteristics of victimization by crime.

In developing the community-oriented policing component of the questionnaire, BJS and COPS worked with a number of community policing survey experts around the Nation. Questions were also gleaned from selected police departments that have conducted community surveys.

The data collected provide a wealth of information for criminal justice researchers and law enforcement professionals interested in examining how community policing works. The data are scheduled for release to researchers and law enforcement in early 1999. The data will be available at no charge and will be made accessible over the Internet.

Participating cities

Twelve cities were selected to participate in the local area survey: Chicago, Kansas City (Missouri), Knoxville, Los Angeles, Madison (Wisconsin), New York City, San Diego, Savannah, Spokane, Springfield (Massachusetts), Tucson, and Washington, DC.⁴ Field work for the city surveys was conducted February through May 1998. Approximately 800 households were interviewed in each city.

Police departments in the 12 sampled cities represent varying stages in the development of community policing. The jurisdictions were chosen because of their initiative and commitment toward incorporating the community policing philosophy into their organizational tasks, goals, and future plans. Priority was given to cities in which the police department was the recipient of a COPS hiring grant and had a population of at least 100,000.

The agencies fell into three general categories: partially incorporated community policing, fully incorporated community policing, and advanced community policing. The level of community policing was assessed using the degree to which police departments had demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Experience with community policing.
- Department-wide philosophy embracing community policing.
- Decentralized organization structure.
- Problem-solving orientation.
- Community outreach and mobilization efforts.
- Training for officers.

The project was designed to allow for comparative and case study analyses. It will be useful to assess citizen attitudes and victimization rates in cities with extended experience in community policing compared with those in earlier stages. (See "Implementation Highlights of the City-Level Surveys.")

Selected community policing questions on city-level surveys

Among the surveys' many community policing questions asked of household respondents were the following:

- How satisfied are you with the quality of life in your neighborhood?
- How fearful are you about crime in your neighborhood?
- In the past 12 months, have you observed any increases or decreases in police officer presence in your neighborhood?
- In general, how satisfied are you with the police who serve your neighborhood?

The sample tables depicted by exhibits 1 and 2 illustrate other types of survey-generated information and how it might be formatted for presentation.

Software for local surveys

To meet the needs of local law enforcement agencies, BJS and COPS developed a Crime Victimization Survey (CVS) software program using Visual Basic and Microsoft Access (a database program for personal computers). Using this software, localities can conduct their own telephone surveys of residents on crime victimization, attitudes toward policing, and other community-related issues. (See exhibit 3 for an illustration of a data-entry screen.)

With this user-friendly, Windows 95-based version of the National Crime Victimization Survey, localities can quickly develop a questionnaire tailored to local interests and needs while maintaining a standard core of National Crime Victimization Survey questions. The CVS software will be available at no charge to the criminal justice community.

During the summer of 1998, the Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland, College Park, field tested the software in a random digit dialing (RDD) telephone survey of city households in Baltimore. The Center evaluated the software and provided BJS with suggestions for

modifications that were incorporated into the release version.⁵

For more information on the software and its availability, please contact Steven K. Smith, BJS, at 202-616-3485; Meg Townsend, COPS Office at 202-633-1322; or ASKBJS@ojp.usdoj.gov.

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CITY-LEVEL SURVEYS

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) notified the police chief in each of the 12 sampled jurisdictions about the city-level survey project. Police departments were informed that the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which collects the survey data, would provide the respondent with a toll free number to call to confirm the legitimacy of the project. Police departments were also asked to provide a contact number if further authentication was needed to satisfy an inquiring potential respondent.

This project represents the first time BJS has used the random digit dialing (RDD) telephone methodology to administer the National Crime Victimization Survey

(NCVS) questionnaire. RDD allows surveys to be conducted at a much lower cost than personal interview methods and, generally, more quickly. This project rigorously tested the RDD methodology. Results from the use of RDD methods will be compared to the response rates and victimization rates found in urban areas using the regular procedures for NCVS.

At the beginning of the interview, respondents were told that the survey was voluntary. As with the regular NCVS data collection, the confidentiality of individual and household level data obtained by telephone is protected by law.

COMMUNITY POLICING

EXHIBIT 1: TYPES OF COMMUNITY CONTRACT WITH THE POLICE, BY GENDER AND RACE

Percentage of citizens with police contact in past 12 months

Type of contact	Total	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Race</i>		
		Male	Female	White	Black	Other
Casual conversation						
Called for service						
Gave information about a crime						
Reported crime						
Police survey						
Asked police for information						
Community activity						
Traffic violation/accident						
Worked with police on specific problem						
No contact with police in last 12 months						

EXHIBIT 2: TYPES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY OBSERVED IN THE COMMUNITY, BY GENDER AND RACE

Percentage of citizens with police contact in past 12 months

Type of crime	Total	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Race</i>		
		Male	Female	White	Black	Other
Selling drugs						
Using drugs						
Auto Theft						
Personal property theft						
Breaking and entering						
Assault						
Crime with gun						
Sexual assault/rape						
Murder						
Not aware of serious crime						

EXHIBIT 3: SURVEY DATA-ENTRY SCREEN

Survey Database

OK [Alt] [Tab] [Ctrl] [Alt] [F4]

12345 Main Street Anytown VA 12345

John Doe - Household NCVS with COPS Supplement

File Edit View Options Database Help

Mode Normal Answer Trace

10) Increase or decrease in police presence

In the past 12 months, have you observed any increases or decreases in police officer presence in your neighborhood or did the number stay the same?

Select ONE of the following

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Have no police in neighborhood
- ☐ Don't know

Notes

1. "Crime in the neighborhood" has been found to be the community problem that bothers people the most, particularly in urban areas, according to data collected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. See DeFrances, C.J., and S.K. Smith, *Perceptions of Neighborhood Crime*, 1995, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998, NCJ 165811.

2. Attorney General Janet Reno created the Office of Community Policing Services in 1994. COPS administers a variety of grant programs to accomplish four primary goals: (1) to increase the number of community policing officers on the beat by 100,000; (2) to promote community policing across the country; (3) to help develop an infrastructure to support and sustain community policing after Federal funding has ended; and (4) to demonstrate and evaluate the

ability of agencies practicing community policing to significantly reduce the levels of violence, crime, and disorder in their communities. COPS is directed by Joseph E. Brann. Further information on COPS programs is available through the Department of Justice Response Center at 800-421-6770, or at <http://www.usdoj.gov/cops>.

A component of the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice, BJS is the primary source for justice statistics in the United States. Directed by Dr. Jan Chaiken, BJS collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operations of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to Federal, State, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. The BJS site on the World Wide Web is located at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

3. Unlike NCVS, the city-level survey used a 12-month reference period.

4. After the first 11 sites were chosen, the National Institute of Justice sponsored the city survey in Washington, D.C., as part of its research support of the D.C. Revitalization Initiative.

5. The minimum system requirements to run the city-level survey software include a personal computer with a 486 processor, 16 megabytes of memory, Windows 95 or Windows NT, a VGA video adapter, and 40 megabytes of free disk space.

Also required is a TAPI-compliant modem or other dialing device so calls can be heard as they are dialed, and a telephony device (a standard phone, speakerphone, or hands-free headset) to conduct interviews after calls are dialed by the system.